

HAM'S BLUFF LIGHTHOUSE,
ASSISTANT KEEPER'S QUARTERS
Maroon Ridge of Ham's Bluff
St. Croix
St. Croix County
U.S. Virgin Island

HABS NO. VI-165-B

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HAM'S BLUFF LIGHTHOUSE,
ASSISTANT KEEPER'S QUARTERS

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Location: At the foot of the access road to the Lighthouse at Maroon Ridge of Ham's Bluff, Northside Quarter "A", St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Island. Historical names: Cape du Diable and Maronberg.

Significance: The significance of the two auxiliary buildings is their association with the Ham's Bluff Lighthouse. The Lighthouse was put into operation in 1913 by the Danish government in response to the building of the Panama Canal. The Danish government believed that, with the Panama Canal, the main route for ships from Europe to the Canal would be between St. Thomas and St. Croix and new navigational facilities would be needed in the Danish West Indies to enhance the U.S. Virgin Islands as an attractive way-station as well as to enhance the Island's attractiveness to the U.S. Government. At the time of construction the lighthouse was a manually operated gas light, hence the reason for the two auxiliary structures for the keepers. The Lighthouse now has an automatic battery operated light.

Description: The original buildings consisted of two single-story concrete dwellings for the Keeper and his assistant, one concrete oil house and one concrete storeroom. The concrete oil house and storeroom were demolished; the foundation of the former building remains. Each of the two dwellings has a porch on the north side (seaside). The larger of the two dwellings has a barrel-vaulted roof. Numerous renovations have been done to the buildings such as the replacement of the wood frame windows for aluminum, the enclosure of door lights to house air conditioning units. None of the latter modifications have any architectural significance. Damage has occurred periodically to the buildings. Hurricane Hugo in September, 1988 destroyed the porch roof of the Storage Building which was subsequently rebuilt. The buildings are deteriorating structurally due to the presence of salt in the concrete.

History: The land for the Lighthouse and auxiliary structures was purchased on July 20, 1912 from J.W. Blackwood by the Board of Danish Lighthouse Service for the amount of 2,812.50 francs, according to records of the Recorder of Deeds Office in Christiansted. The Lighthouse and auxiliary building construction started in late 1912 and the Lighthouse

was inaugurated on 15 July 1913. The Danish Government was the owner of record, and the construction cost an estimated 60,000 Danish kroner according reports in the St. Croix newspaper, AVIS.

In June, 1913, the engineer, Mr. Brinck, went out on the Donnenborg with a Mr. Merwin to determine how far out the lighthouse would be visible (25 nautical miles).

The lighthouse, dwellings and land were purchased by the Federal Government from the Danish Government in 1916. This was unique in that at the time of purchase it was the only lighthouse in the Danish West Indies owned by the Danish Government. The U.S. Navy assumed operation in 1916 until 1919, when it was taken over by the U.S. Lighthouse Service. Currently, the U.S. Coast Guard operates the lighthouse; the dwellings are now used by the U.S. Naval Avionics Center as a Calibration Laboratory and a Storage and Administrative Building.

Sources:

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St. Croix AVIS, No. 49, 18 June 1913.

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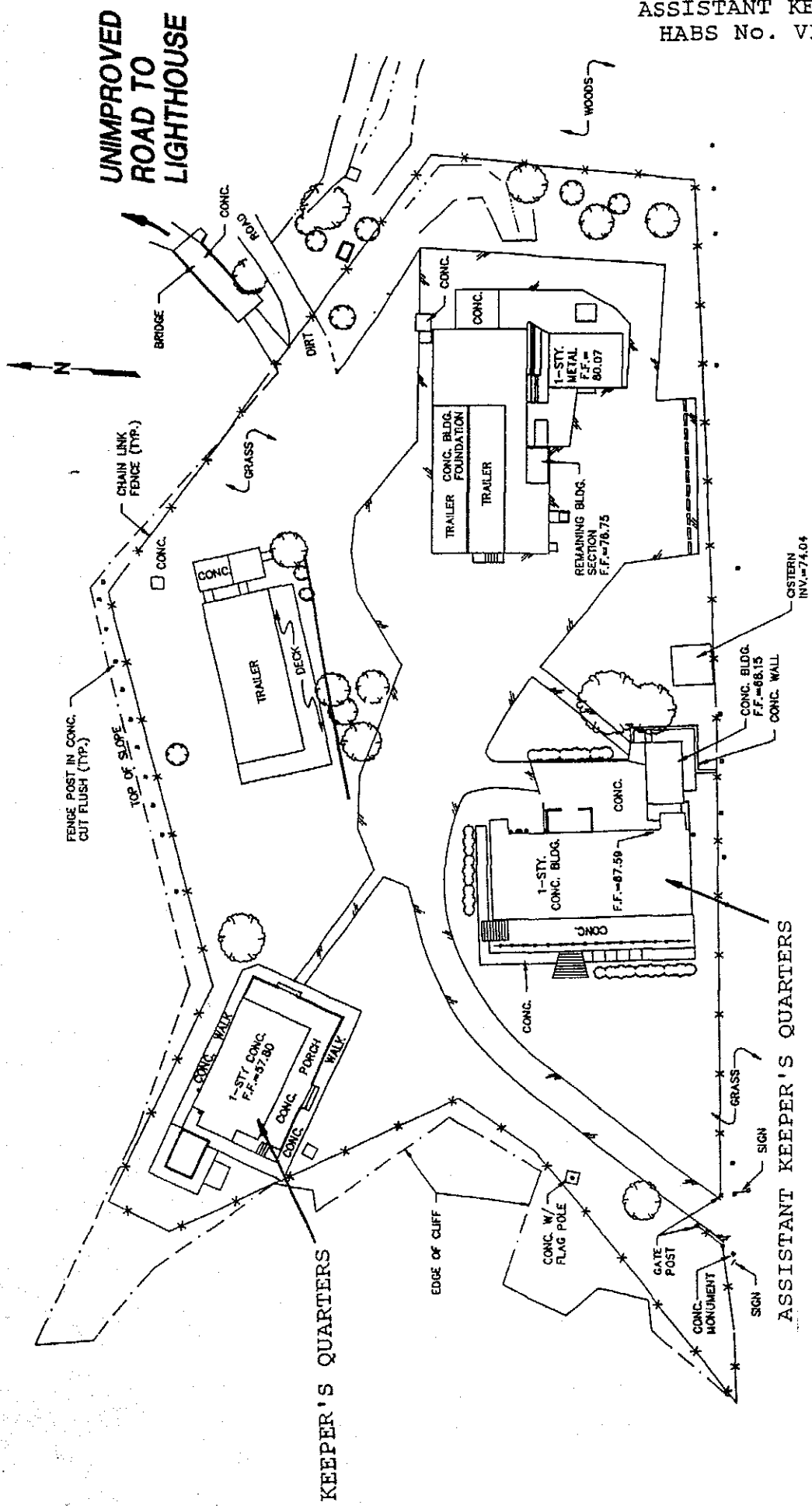
Op.Cit., No. 56, 12 July 1913.

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Lewisohn, Florence St. Croix under Seven Flags, Dukane Press, Hollywood, FL, 1970.

Historian:

Kenneth G. Stepka, P.E.



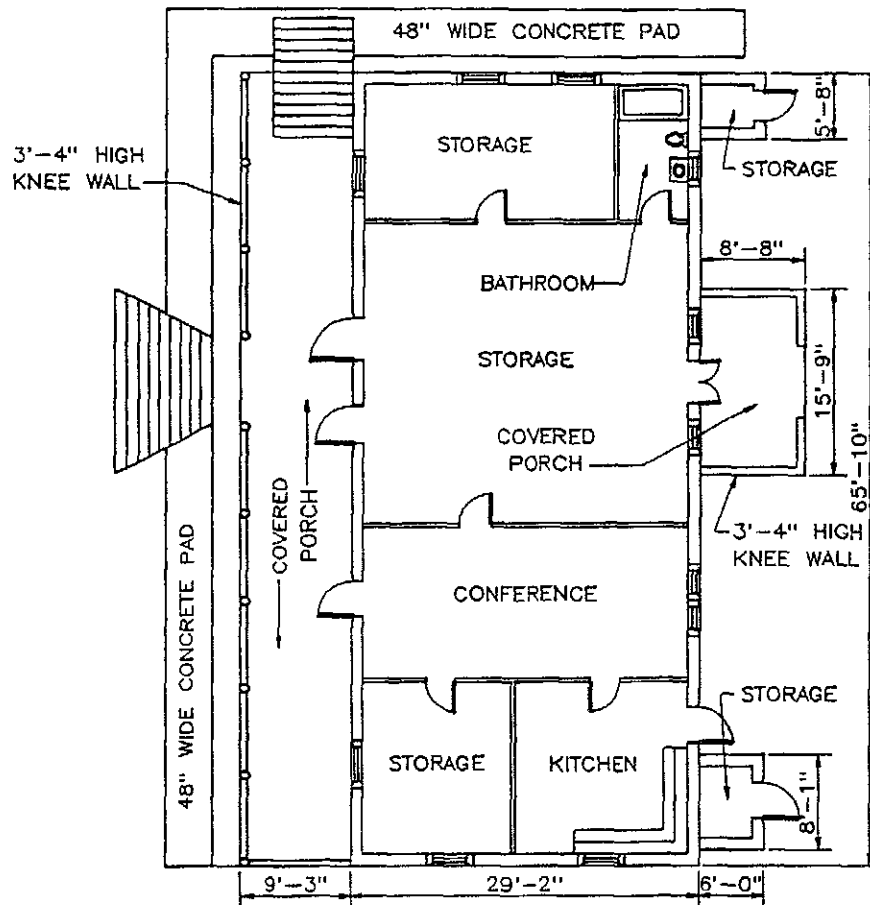
SITE PLAN - HAM'S BLUFF

OCTOBER 1990

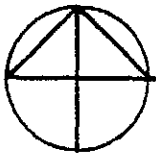
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HAM'S BLUFF LIGHTHOUSE,
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ROOM DESIGNATIONS REPRESENT
PRESENT USAGE. FORMER USAGE
UNKNOWN.



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